

you are known by the company you keep

where is the black snake of my
dream, fleeing the pressure of
my thumping steps atop its
watery sanctum?

traversing sand is exhausting,
though an overcast day spontaneously
I sweat bullets, legs gone flaccid, thermal
layers sloughed off in the trough of some
undulation in the track, woozy
at the crossroads, signposts a toy
motorbike & high-tension wires;
jittery rabbits of the pre-dusk light
glide down gouges in the sand made from
motorbikes, to hide in the safer sinks under
paperbarks; willy wagtail & one long-legged
laconic marsh bird, not to forget, a cadre of
(devote) flies, the company I keep at the
corner of Anstey and Keane:

flora exiled in the southern suburbs
browned Mangles kangaroo paws,
orchids aslumber, the charred outer
bark of a balga tree, old slow grower
with a bromeliad splash of hair, I see
the grass tree, I see the Black Boy,
if I tried hard enough: a coolamon leaking
a saccharin ferment; touch confirms sight
smell is non-registering,
but taste ahhh
an exclusion.

John C. Ryan